

# WEST PLAINS IPM UPDATE

News about  
Integrated Pest  
Management in  
Hockley,  
Cochran, and  
Lamb Counties  
from  
Kerry Siders



July 10, 2025

Vol. 30 – No. 7

## PEST SITUATION

In general, insect pests are more active this last couple of weeks than I have seen in some years. I can find both mature and immature cotton fleahoppers in and around most cotton fields especially when silverleaf nightshade (aka whiteweed) is present. In terms of their impact on the cotton it is all over the board and simply a field-by-field situation. **EACH FIELD MUST BE SCOUTED!** I think we are fortunate to still have 80% square retention in most fields. But trust me there are fields with much lower square set which could most likely be because of fleahopper damage. I can find lygus in field margins being held by weed species. I am getting reports from a few consultants that they are starting to see them move into adjacent cotton fields. **SCOUT!** I am seeing more consistent cotton aphid presence as well. I can see winged forms which indicate they have just moved in and while others have been here for a while. Currently I am not averaging more than 5 per leaf in fields that I check. **SCOUT!** The past several years I've not seen them this consistent across this many acres. Stay tuned and **SCOUT!** Hopefully beneficials will assist in keeping these in check. Grasshoppers have been found along a few field margins particularly near grasslands. Not seeing much in the sorghum pests yet other than whorl feeding. Corn leafhopper is here, and you must decide if you should treat. Hear Dr. Kerns' latest update on the next page. Weeds are an issue in all crops. Keep chipping away, just be mindful of the law and respect for neighbors.

## COTTON CROP GROWTH SITUATION

Cotton growth and development update based on irrigated IPM Scouting Program fields looks like this:

- 9.5" height (range 4.25" - 12.0")
- 11.8 total nodes (range 6.0 - 15.0)
- 0.8" per internode length whole plant (range 0.5" - 1.0")
- 1.7" per internode length 4<sup>th</sup> node from top
- 1<sup>st</sup> fruiting branch at node 6.3 (range 5 - 8)
- 5.8 first position squares (range 0 - 9 very near bloom)
- 85% square retention (range 66%-98%)
- Anticipate going into bloom with 8.5 nodes above white flower (NAWF)

# Corn Leafhopper Update

Here is the latest (July 10) from Dr. Kerns regarding the corn leafhopper:

<https://on.soundcloud.com/Yaa1mlfNApYgN1p7Ya>

For more information on the corn leafhopper and the subsequent red stunt disease it causes go to one of these links: <https://cdn-de.agrilife.org/extension/departments/ento/ento-pu-229/publications/files/corn-leafhopper-and-the-red-stunt-disease-complex.pdf>

<https://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/s/product/corn-leafhopper-and-the-red-stunt-disease-complex/O1t4x00008VcS6AAK>

## ***Cotton Scouting & Plant Mapping Turnrow Mtg***

***@ Barker Research Farm - Morton***

**July 18, 9-10 am,**

**Here is the location:**

**<https://maps.app.goo.gl/6eYwXsvwDPDTGUFi7>**

**FM 1780, 2.5 miles east of TX Hwy 214, Morton**

**We will gather in the barn.**



If you are interested in receiving the High Plains Pest Management Audio Updates on a weekly basis click on this link and sign-up to receive notifications of the reports:

**<https://www.texasinsects.org/signup-high-plains--south-plains.html>**

For those of you using an Android phone you may not be receiving the weekly notification that a new report has been released due to a setting on your text messaging system. I am troubleshooting the issue currently as I am having an issue with my cell phone as well. Stay tuned for a fix.

# PGR Use Considerations for Cotton,

by Dr. Ken Lege, Extension Cotton Specialist, Lubbock

Most growers in west Texas are experiencing moist, if not wet, soil conditions. While this is a great opportunity for growing cotton in our region, it also presents some challenges, such as weed control, fertility, and fleahoppers. The other issue we may be dealing with soon is excessive vegetative growth, and the question becomes: do I need to apply plant growth regulator (mepiquat choride and all its derivatives and related chemistries) to my cotton? Since many of you may not be accustomed to applying PGRs on cotton, especially this time of year, and especially on some dryland fields that may be experiencing growth, I thought it may be a good idea to send a factsheet I compiled last year.

This one-pager lists several items to consider when deciding whether your cotton field requires a PGR application. Among the most important is field history. Knowing whether a field has ever experienced excessive vegetative growth is key to this decision. Other items on the list: variety type, weather forecast, fruit load, pest pressure, and the length of the 4<sup>th</sup> internode from the terminal (a great measure of current growth rate).

Many of you may not be familiar with the concept of considering the length of the 4<sup>th</sup> internode. Details are on the factsheet. One side of the factsheet has some guidance on how long that internode should be at various stages of growth. The target differs according to the number of mainstem nodes, easily determined by counting from the cotyledonary node up to the terminal node.

While the factsheet does not recommend use rates of all the various formulations of PGR available, it does help guide you to make the decision to apply or not apply. Remember also that if you are unsure whether you should apply, one option is to wait 5-7 days and reassess the condition of the crop.

SCSC2024-08

## Environmental & Cultural Considerations For PGR Applications

Ken E. Legé\*, Ph.D., Extension Cotton Specialist, Lubbock, TX

### INTERNODE LENGTH

- Length of 4<sup>th</sup> Internode from terminal (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 on back)

### VARIETY

- Determinate vs Indeterminate

### SOIL MOISTURE

- Avoid applications in deficit situations
- Plant height can be a good indicator

### WEATHER FORECAST

- Avoid applications under hot and dry conditions in the next 5 to 7 weather forecast

### FIELD PRODUCTIVITY

- Fertility, irrigation capacity, and soil type
- Know field history regarding yield and height potential
- Plant height can be a good indicator (current height vs historical height)

### FRUIT LOAD

- Lower rates may be needed if retention and fruit load is high
- Higher rates may be needed if significant shed has occurred
- Node Above White Flower (NAWF) should be 7 to 10 during early to peak bloom (Fig 1.)

### PEST PRESSURE

- Insects, weeds, nematodes, and diseases can affect growth rate

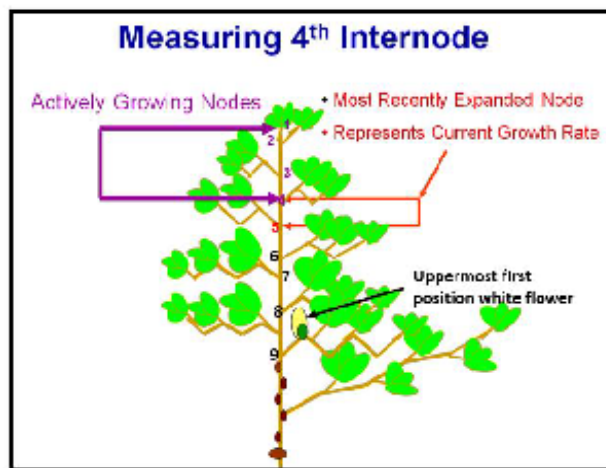


Fig. 1. Plant in diagram shows the location of Internode 4 and NAWF 9.



TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

# Target Growth Rate for PGR Applications

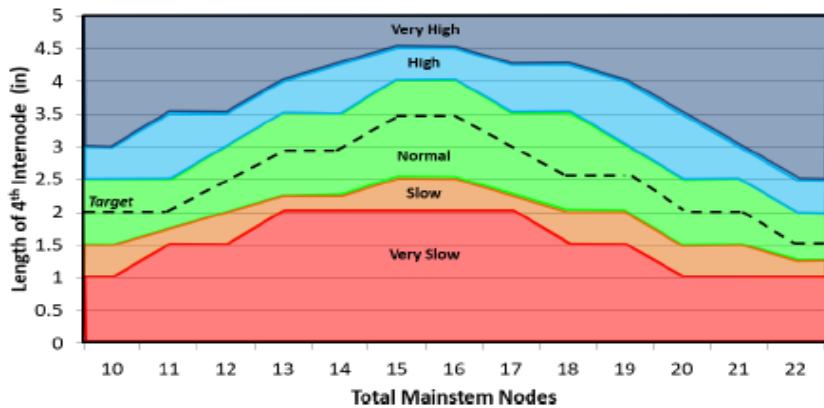


Fig.2. Target growth rate as determined by length of 4<sup>th</sup> internode at various total mainstem node stages

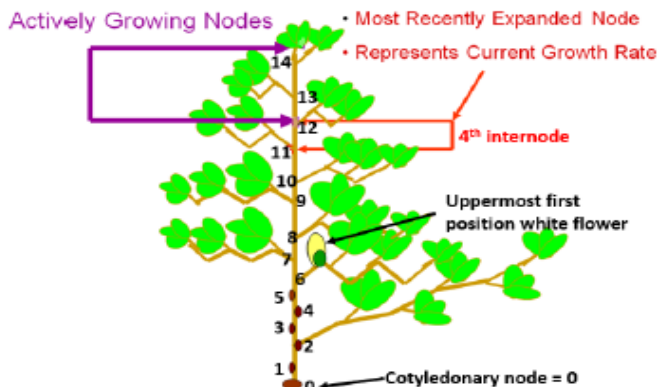


Fig.3. Diagram shows 14 mainstem nodes.

Determine mainstem nodes by counting from cotyledonary node (count as zero), up to the terminal leaf node (unfurled, about size of a quarter). Measure 4<sup>th</sup> internode length (Fig 1.). If 4<sup>th</sup> internode length is within normal, slow, or very slow range, consider not applying mepiquat chloride. If 4<sup>th</sup> internode length is high or very high, consider applying mepiquat chloride.

If after examining the field and considering all the environmental and cultural factors, it is difficult to decide if a PGR application is warranted, wait 5 to 7 days and monitor the field and the conditions.

The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is implied. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are equal opportunity employers and program providers. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, Acts of Congress of May 8, 1914, as amended, and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. Rick Avery, Director, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, The Texas A&M University System. Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, soilcrop.tamu.edu.

**West Plains IPM Update** is a publication of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service IPM Program in Hockley, Cochran, and Lamb Counties.

Editor: Kerry Siders, Extension Agent-IPM  
 Contact information:  
 1212 Houston St., Suite 2 Levelland, TX 79336  
 (806) 894-3150 (office),  
 638-5635 (mobile)  
[ksiders@tamu.edu](mailto:ksiders@tamu.edu) (E-mail)



*Partners with Nature*

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. The information given herein is for educational purposes only. References to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is implied.

The Texas A&M System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating